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SIPDIS

DEPT WHA/CAR for Jackie Rosholt, IIP/SDIS for Mona Esquetini, IIP/S
for Camille Barone, WHA/PDA for Chad West

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OEXC NS

SUBJECT: U.S. Speaker feeds hunger for elections information,
engages gender and business audiences

¶1. (U) This cable is a program evaluation of FY 2008 U.S. SSI
Speaker Ann Stone

¶1A. Name of Speaker: Ann Stone

¶1B. Dates of Program: May 19 - May 21 2008

¶1C. MSP Themes Addressed: Goal #1, mutual U.S./Suriname appreciation
and respect contributing to a more effective partnership; Goal #2,
strong democratic and judicial institutions, supported by effective
law enforcement. SSI Goal: Democracy and Human Rights.

¶1D. Summary: SSI Speaker Ann Stone spoke to diverse audiences on a
wide variety of topics: the 2008 elections in the United States,
women in politics, and business issues including entrepreneurship
and women in business. Post receives frequent requests for
information on the U.S. elections, and was delighted to have the
opportunity to participate in an SSI program on elections.

Elections programming would probably have filled only a single day,
and because of flight schedules, the minimum visit to Suriname for a
speaker is usually three days. Ms. Stone's wide-ranging resume and
flexibility allowed Post to fill her three days with nine events,
including last-minute events on her final day when she agreed to
requests for additional programming from interlocutors.

¶1E. Audience reached and size: Speaking on elections, Stone
addressed 50 university students, met with a group of election
organizers and observers, and gave two "exclusive" interviews: one
with the newspaper of record and one for television. Stone also
spoke on women in politics for an audience of 30 that included
Members of Parliament, Members of the Youth Parliament,
non-governmental organization officials, and students. She repeated
this topic for a roundtable discussion with the Suriname Gender
Platform and during a follow-up meeting with a small group of Youth
Parliamentarians. Stone gave a lecture for twenty high school
students on Modern American History, looking at the period 1920 -
¶1972. Finally, Stone was featured at a dinner hosted by Post's
EconOff, where she discussed with seven members of the American
Chamber of Commerce of Suriname (AmCham) the role of business and
Chambers of Commerce in impacting government policy-making.

¶1F. Effectiveness of the speaker in communicating intended messages
to target audience: Surinamese are fascinated by the 2008 U.S.
Presidential Election cycle and Embassy contacts were therefore
delighted when the Embassy notified them of Ann Stone's visit. The
students who attended her elections lecture were eager to
participate and came prepared with written questions. However,
Stone's talk was short on detail and long on personal history, and
her off-the-cuff speaking style may not have been appropriate for
the complex topic being covered. Her lecture, "Women in Politics...
the impact on civil society" earned her rave reviews with her first,
younger audience, but led to a personal squabble with one of the
invited guests during her roundtable discussion with the Suriname
Gender Platform, whose members later told Embassy staff they found
Stone's presentation simplistic and out-dated. Other events yielded

similar mixed results.

IG. Type and Quality of IIP support: Post arranged this program in partnership with Embassy Kingston and Embassy Port of Spain and is grateful for the assistance received from IIP and WHA/PDA.

IH. Impact: Stone was successful at creating meaningful discussion at a majority of her events, and this dynamism did contribute to promoting mutual understanding between Suriname and the United States, even though her style sometimes appeared condescending and her presentations off-hand. Her lectures offered a way for the audience to directly interact with a Washington "insider" rather than reading/watching U.S. election news in the media or, as one Surinamese event organizer put it, simply hearing "the official line" from the Embassy. There is no question that Stone's perspectives on women energized some audience members, particularly younger ones, and Post will use this as a springboard for further interaction with women in emerging leadership positions in Suriname.

SCHREIBERHUGHES